



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Safety Recommendation

Date: January 14, 1991

In reply refer to: M-90-104

Mr. Robert Springob
President
Laredo Construction, Inc.
13385 Murphy Road
Stafford, Texas 77477

On June 29, 1989, the U.S. self-elevating uninspected liftboat M/V TITAN finished its work at Corpus Christi Oil and Gas Block 427 where it had been elevated in about 95 feet of water. The TITAN had a crew of four, plus five Laredo Construction, Inc., employees aboard. About 1330 the master lowered the liftboat and headed it toward Freeport, Texas. While the 160-foot legs were being raised, the TITAN began listing to starboard. The master believed the list was caused by mud on the starboard leg pad. However, the master found on inspection that the starboard leg was flooded and gushing water on deck through a fracture or fractures in the leg. The master directed the legs to be lowered to improve the stability of the vessel. While the legs were being lowered the TITAN capsized about 1345.¹

Six survivors on the TITAN were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard. Divers who searched the flooded vessel recovered one body from the galley, but two Laredo employees remain missing. The TITAN was valued at \$2,200,000. The TITAN was salvaged and delivered to Freeport, Texas, on September 5, 1989.

Neither the surviving crewmembers nor the offshore workers had received any formal marine safety or survival training. However, crewmembers or workers employed aboard liftboats and offshore supply vessels are not required to be provided survival training as has been done in parts of the commercial fishing industry. The North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners' Association vessel safety manual has been distributed to some fishing vessels, and industry-sponsored safety courses have been developed for fishermen. Had the crewmembers and offshore workers aboard the TITAN received survival training, they would have been aware of the hazards of shipboard operations and better prepared to cope with the unexpected capsizing. Their inability to obtain life preservers suggests that the possibility and consequences of a capsizing was unanticipated and all aboard were completely unprepared for the event. The Safety Board believes that a

¹For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report--Capsizing and Sinking of the Self-elevating Liftboat M/V TITAN, Gulf of Mexico, June 29, 1989" (NTSB/MAR-90/07).

need exists for crewmembers and workers employed aboard offshore industry vessels to receive survival training similar to that currently being provided in the commercial fishing industry.

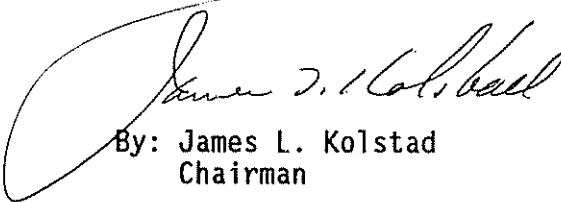
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Laredo Construction, Inc.:

Provide your employees working offshore with marine safety and survival training that relates to the hazards encountered while engaged in offshore vessel operations.
(Class II, Priority Action) (M-90-104)

Also, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations M-90-85 through -99 to the U.S. Coast Guard, M-100 through -103 to Coastal Marine Lift Barges, Inc., and M-105 through -109 to the Offshore Marine Services Association.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility "to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any action taken as a result of its safety recommendations. Therefore, it would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendations in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation M-90-104.

KOLSTAD, Chairman, COUGHLIN, Vice Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, and HART, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: James L. Kolstad
Chairman